

Message Text

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67

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 AID-20 DRC-01 /101 W

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O 152200Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0494

INFO AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE IMMEDIATE

CINCSO IMMEDIATE

CINCLANT POLAD IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 2015

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: SANTIAGO ACCORD PULLS OUT OF ELECTIONS

REF : SD 1982

1. THREE HOURS BEFORE THE ELECTORAL PERIOD OFFICIALLY CLOSED AT MIDNIGHT LAST NIGHT (MAY 14, THE FOUR SANTIAGO ACCORD PARTIES ANNOUNCED ON RADIO COMERCIAL THAT THEY WERE FORMALLY WITHDRAWING ALL OF THEIR CANDIDATES FROM THE MAY 16 ELECTIONS.

2. IN HIS ABSTENTION SPEECH, PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE ANTONIO GUZMAN FERNANDEZ PLACED THE BLAME FOR THE ACCORD'S DECISION TO ABSTAIN FROM ELECTIONS SQUARELY ON THE SHOULDERS OF THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL BOARD (JCE) AND THE BALAGUER GOVERNMENT, ALLEGING THAT BOTH FAILED TO PROVIDE MINIMUM CONDITIONS FOR THE HOLDING OF FREE AND HONEST ELECTIONS.

3. PARTIDO REVOLUCIONARIO DOMINICANO (PRD) SECRETARY GENERAL JOSE FRANCISCO PENA GOMEZ FOLLOWED GUZMAN'S SPEECH LAST NIGHT, REITERATING THE CHARGES AGAINST THE

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JCE AND THE GODR AND ASSERTING THAT THE NEXT GOVERNMENT

"WILL BE ILLEGITIMATE AND WILL NOT DESERVE THE BACKING OF THE PEOPLE NOR INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION."
NONETHELESS, BOTH GUZMAN AND PENA INSTRUCTED THE ACCORD'S ADHERENTS TO ABSTAIN FROM ORGANIZING OR PARTICIPATING IN ANY STRIKES, DEMONSTRATIONS, ACTS OF VIOLENCE, OR CONFRONTATIONS WITH THE ARMED FORCES OR NATIONAL POLICE. THE DOCUMENT CONTAINING THE ACCORD'S WITHDRAWAL FROM ELECTIONS WAS REPORTEDLY DELIVERED THIS MORNING (MAY 15) TO THE JCE.

4. LAST MINUTE CONCILIATORY EFFORTS BY COADJUTOR BISHOP HUGO POLANCO BRITO AND LISTIN DIARIO DIRECTOR RAFAEL HERRERA FAILED TO PREVENT THE ACCORD PARTIES FROM FORMALLY ANNOUNCING THEIR WITHDRAWAL. NONETHELESS, THERE WERE INDICATIONS FROM BOTH SIDES OF A WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE THE DIALOGUE. POLANCO BRITO AND HERRERA REPORTEDLY SPOKE LAST NIGHT WITH BALAGUER WHO, ACCORDING TO HERRERA, INDICATED A HIGHLY CONCILIATORY ATTITUDE AND INVITED THE ACCORD LEADERS TO MEET PERSONALLY WITH HIM IN A DIRECT ATTEMPT TO IRON OUT SOME OF THE DIFFERENCES SPEARATING THE TWO SIDES. THE OPPOSITION APPARENTLY AGREED TO MEET WITH THE PRESIDENT SOMETIME TODAY BUT ONLY AFTER REACHING SOME SORT OF PRIOR AGREEMENT ON A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC DEMANDS. IN THIS REGARD, MUCH OF TODAY (MAY 15) HAS BEEN SPENT IN NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN MEDIATORS POLANCO BRITO AND HERRERA AND ACCORD REPRESENTATIVES. ACCORDING TO SEVERAL EMBASSY SOURCES, THE OPPOSITION IS DEMANDING A) POSTPONE-
MENT OF ELECTIONS FOR 20 DAYS, B) RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS, 3) RETURN OF EX-GENERAL WESSIN Y WESSIN, 4) ABSTENTION OF ARMED FORCES FROM POLITICAL ACTIVITY, AND 5) REVOCATION OF RECENT JCE MODIFICATIONS OF ELECTORAL PROCEDURES.

5. COMMENT: SHOULD THE TALKS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION BREAK DOWN, THE JCE HAS PUBLICLY STATED THAT ELECTIONS WILL STILL BE HELD TOMORROW DESPITE THE ABSENCE OF AN EFFECTIVE OPPOSITION. (THE MINISCULE PARTIDO DEMOCRATA POPULAR (PDP) CANDIDATE LUIS HOMERO LAJARA BURGESS ANNOUNCED LAST NIGHT THAT HE WILL NOT WITHDRAW HIS CANDIDACY. NO ONE, HOWEVER, SERIOUSLY
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BELIEVES LAJARA COULD RECEIVE MORE THAN 1 PERCENT OF THE VOTE.) DESPITE LAST MINUTE INDICATIONS OF AN OFFICIAL WILLINGNESS TO YIELD ON MANY, IF NOT MOST OF THE OPPOSITION'S DEMANDS, ONE OF THE MAJOR STUMBLING BLOCKS APPEARS TO BE THE RELEASE OF "POLITICAL PRISONERS" AND THE RETURN OF EX-GENERAL ELIAS WESSIN Y WESSIN. PERHAPS OF MORE SIGNIFANCE IN BLOCKING AN AGREEMENT, HOWEVER, IS THE OVERT POLITICAL ACTIVITY (REPEATEDLY DENIED BY

ARMED FORCES SECRETARY EMILIO JIMENEZ) OF THE ARMED FORCES
ON BEHALF OF BALAGUER'S REELECTION.

6. SINCE IT APPEARS THAT BOTH SIDES STAND TO GAIN BY
HAVING THE OPPOSITION PARTICIPATE IN TOMORROW'S ELECTION,
AND AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GODR AND THE ACCORD IS STILL POSSIBLE
AT THE ELEVENTH HOUR. UNLESS SOME LEGAL MEANS CAN BE FOUND
TO POSTPONE THE ELECTION, IT IS QUESTIONABLE THAT USHC AN AGREE-
MENT CAN BE ACHIEVED WITH ONLY A FEW HOURS REMAINING BEFORE THE
MIDNIGHT DEADLINE.
HURWITCH

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